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SUBJECT: U.S.-ROK BILATERAL COUNTERTERRORISM MEETING HELD
DECEMBER 16

11. (SBU) Summary: In the second round of U.S.-ROK bilateral counterterrorism consultations, the ROK expressed growing concern over terrorist attacks on Korean nationals abroad. Outlining its increasing international and domestic counterterrorism efforts, the ROK reiterated the desire to work closely with the U.S., particularly in the areas of information-sharing, terrorist financing and their planned PRT in Afghanistan. End Summary.

12. (SBU) The second round of U.S.-ROK counterterrorism consultations took place in Seoul on December 16. The U.S. delegation was led by Shari Villarosa, Deputy Coordinator for Regional Affairs, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, and included Embassy Seoul representatives from DOS, FBI, DEA, ICE and the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as United States Forces Korea. The Korean delegation was led by Ambassador for International Counterterrorism Cooperation Lee Joon Gyu and included representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT), Ministry of Defense (MND), National Police Agency (NPA) and Korean Coast Guard. The consultations focused on each country's domestic and international counterterrorism policies and activities, especially with regards to Pakistan and Afghanistan, and how the U.S. and ROK can work together in the future.

13. (SBU) Ambassador Lee began with an assessment of the terrorism situation in Korea and the Afghanistan/Pakistan region, stating that although the threat of a homegrown terrorist attack is low, the ROK is concerned about the threat its citizens face overseas. Lee noted that four Korean tourists were killed in a suicide bombing in Yemen, for which al-Qaida claimed responsibility, and another Korean medical worker was killed in a separate incident in Afghanistan. Lee praised the U.S. for leading the way in global counterterrorism efforts and welcomed President Obama's decision to send more troops to Afghanistan.

14. (SBU) Regarding international activities and cooperation, Lee highlighted the role that Korea, which has joined all United Nations (UN) conventions on terrorism, has played in regional counterterrorism fora such as ASEM, APEC and ASEAN 3, including sharing its high-tech computer expertise at the November 2009 APEC Seminar on Protection of Cyber Security. Lee also noted the significant progress made in strengthening Korea's anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist finance legislation and thanked the U.S. for its support of Korea's accession to the OECD Financial Action Task Force. According to Lee, U.S.-ROK law enforcement relations are very good. Earlier this year, the ROK sent police officers to attend hostage negotiations training with the NYPD.

15. (SBU) On the domestic front, the ROKG has developed national guidelines that define the roles and

responsibilities of each agency, and is working on interagency coordination. According to Lee, MOFAT has the lead role in the case of an overseas attack on Koreans, but the NPA is responsible for domestic terrorism investigation and action, and they rely on close collaboration with the National Intelligence Service (NIS), Interpol and U.S. agencies. The NPA also provides training to officers from developing countries, though financial constraints limit the number of participants the ROK can train. Lee stated that the ROK will continue to upgrade its readiness, and he stressed that international cooperation and information-sharing are vital to success in preventing terrorist attacks.

16. (SBU) Regarding areas for further cooperation, Ambassador Lee and Deputy Coordinator Villarosa agreed on the need for very close collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in Kabul in setting up the ROK Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan. The Koreans were very interested in U.S. PRT training and opportunities for their civilians to receive training before they depart. Ambassador Lee also asked for closer and more regular talks between the U.S. and Korean embassies in countries with significant terrorist threats, to share information that could protect overseas Koreans in those countries. Villarosa and RSO assured Lee that our embassies stood ready to cooperate with their Korean counterparts. She also emphasized that the U.S. and Korea should continue to work through regional and multilateral fora to build capacity of others, and suggested cyber security and critical infrastructure protection could be potential areas of future cooperation.

STEPHENS